



Immigrant job fair, p.6



Favorite teacher nominee, p.12

## Council Honors City's Educators; Discusses General Assembly Bills

by Michael Zeliff

In addition to honoring outstanding employees at public schools in Greenbelt at its March 11 meeting, the Greenbelt City Council largely focused on deciding whether or not to support relevant bills now being considered by the Maryland General Assembly.

Council's first major business was honoring a teacher or staff member from each of Greenbelt's six public schools. Stephenie Arcido and Robert Snyder, members of Greenbelt's Advisory Committee on Education, along with Greenbelt Councilmember Jenni Pompei, introduced the six honorees. The individuals recognized for their outstanding contributions to their schools are:

Stephanie Abuelhawa, fourth grade teacher, Greenbelt Elementary School

Byron Snowden, school security and coach, Greenbelt Middle School

Judith Barrera, social studies teacher, Eleanor Roosevelt High School

Mercy Faeldonia, second grade teacher, Magnolia Elementary School

Kristen Ransome, paraprofessional and coach, Dora Kennedy French Immersion School

Dr. Ivy Wilcher, kindergarten teacher, Springhill Lake Elementary School.

The educators praised the students with whom they worked. Barrera said her students taught her resilience, empathy and love.

Prince George's County Councilmember Ingrid Watson and Board of Education member Jonathan Briggs attended the ceremony.

See **COUNCIL**, page 6

### Women in Greenbelt

## Councilmember Amy Knesel, New to Politics, Not to Greenbelt

by Bonnie Schrack

She may be new to politics, but it's a natural progression for someone as people-oriented, energetic and concerned about her fellow Greenbelters as Amy Knesel. She grew up in subsidized low-income housing in Gaithersburg. In elementary school, she found herself confronted with injustices. She was a white girl in a primarily Black neighborhood and was troubled to see herself treated better, given attention and encouragement by the school system, while other kids in her neighborhood struggled, faced low expectations and received little help. "It's in large part thanks to my stature as a white middle-class woman that I've been able to have opportunities to do things without a four-year degree," says Knesel. Those early experiences motivated her to learn more about what brings about such situations and what can be done to change things.

Living in Hyattsville as a stay-at-home mom, Knesel says, "I felt so alone.... I was really craving community." She discovered Greenbelt when she and her husband wanted a good nursery school for their son. They loved Greenbelt Nursery School and



PHOTO BY BONNIE SCHRACK

**Greenbelt City Council's newest member is Amy Knesel, appointed to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Councilmember Ric Gordon.**

found the community appealing too. "When we bought in Greenbelt, it was like, this is where we're supposed to be! This was the best decision we could have made for our family, for our kids, for our mental health, for our physical well-being," says Knesel.

From her active involvement as a nursery school parent,

Knesel went on to be part of the PTA, Cub Scouts and Soccer

See **KNESEL**, page 7

### What Goes On

**Monday, March 25**

**7:30 p.m., City Council Meeting, Municipal Building**

**Wednesday, March 27**

**7:30 p.m., Council Budget Worksession: Overview, Revenues & General Government/ Other Funds/Non-Departmental & Fund Transfers/Economic Development, Municipal Building**

See the city ad on page 5 or the meetings calendar at [greenbeltnmd.gov](http://greenbeltnmd.gov) for more information.

## Biden's Budget Has \$3.5 Billion Up Front for FBI's Greenbelt HQ

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

The vision of an FBI headquarters here in Greenbelt became more concrete this month when upfront funding for the project was included in the Presidential Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, which begins October 1, 2024. This is a significant indicator that the administration plans to move forward with construction, even while the review of the site selection by the Inspector General is ongoing and Virginia officials continue to cry foul.

### Fraught History

On November 8, 2023, the General Services Administration (GSA) announced the selection of Greenbelt as the future home for the FBI headquarters, a search that began in 2009 (see the November 16, 2023, issue). On November 30, 2023, the Office of the Inspector General of the GSA, the body's watchdog,



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

**Governor Wes Moore celebrates the decision to bring the FBI to Greenbelt at a November 2023 press conference.**

announced it would review the selection process and the allegations of foul play from Virginia lawmakers, who had wanted Springfield to be the selected site (see the December 7, 2023,

issue). That probe is ongoing. Thus, the allocation of money in the Presidential Budget for construction to commence in

See **FBI**, page 9

## City Council Joins Board of Ed In Opposing County Council Bills

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

Currently, most taxes from telecommunications and energy/fuel in Prince George's County are earmarked for education. However, that long-secured source of revenue could soon be removed if two draft bills (House Bills 396 and 398) are passed. A fiscal note for HB 398, regarding the revenue proceeds generated by the telecommunications tax,

states that local appropriation for the school system "may decrease by \$13.1 million in FY 2025 and by \$16.0 million in FY 2029." The fiscal note on HB 396, which would remove educational earmarks from the sales and use tax on energy and fuel, notes "Prince George's County expenditures (local appropriation) for the county's school system

may decrease by \$53.2 million in FY 2025 and by \$64.7 million in FY 2029." Greenbelt City Council is writing a letter expressing its opposition.

As reported in last week's issue and further this week (see p. 7), the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is an ambitious and

See **COUNTY**, page 8



PHOTO BY ERICA JOHNS

**Thursday morning with the News Review: four men sit in Roosevelt Center on Thursday morning, March 14, each with News Review in hand. Friend and News Review distributor Alan Burt hand delivered their papers after delivering to the Credit Union and New Deal Café.**



Editorial

## To Keep Our Buses, More Must Ride Them

The G12 Metrobus route will be eliminated this summer if the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority does not secure additional funding, and Prince George’s County’s The Bus Route 11 will soon run less frequently – every 45 minutes instead of every 30 minutes – so that public transit can be distributed more equitably countywide. It is not surprising that these routes, which serve the central part of Greenbelt and Greenbelt East, were targeted for service cuts because ridership is relatively lower on them than on other nearby bus routes.

Mid-day this past Saturday the G12 bus was nearly full by the time it reached Greenbelt Metro Drive but that is unusual. Many G12 trips, through central Greenbelt in particular, pass stop after stop with no one waiting to board or requesting to get off, even during what are generally peak travel times. The same is true for The Bus Route 11.

More Greenbelters should ride the buses, not just to Metrorail stations – the G12 goes to both the Greenbelt and New Carrollton stations, the Route 11 only to the Greenbelt station – but to places along the way. Consider taking one of these buses to Greenway Center for your morning cup of coffee or to shop, to the Greenbelt post office or to appointments in medical offices along Hanover Parkway or Greenway Center Drive (the G12, but not Route 11, also stops at Doctors Community Medical Center). Take The Bus to the Greenbelt Federal Courthouse (to see the Quilts Across Maryland exhibit!) or the G12 to the Greenbelt Cemetery or offices along Ivy Lane. Sure, you may have to walk a bit further to and from the bus stops than if you’d driven, but view it as an opportunity to get some exercise – and to reduce your carbon footprint.

The Bus offers free rides to those over age 60, those with disabilities and youth ages 5 to 18. Metrobus offers reduced fares to those age 65 and above (with a Senior SmarTrip card, available at no cost at the Greenbelt Library), local SNAP recipients and those with disabilities (see [wmata.com/fares/Reduced-Fare-Programs](http://wmata.com/fares/Reduced-Fare-Programs) for how to apply). For schedules and route maps go to [wmata.com/schedules/timetables/upload/G12\\_221211.pdf](http://wmata.com/schedules/timetables/upload/G12_221211.pdf) (buseta.wmata.com/#G12 for real-time information) and [princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/public-works-transportation/thebus/routes-schedules/route-11](http://princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/public-works-transportation/thebus/routes-schedules/route-11).

**Drop us a Line!**  
Electronically, that is.  
[editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com](mailto:editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com)



On Screen at Greenbelt Cinema

## Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire

In this film, the Spengler family returns to where it all started –the iconic New York City firehouse – to team up with the original Ghostbusters, who’ve developed a top-secret research lab to take busting ghosts to the next level. But when the discovery of an ancient artifact unleashes an evil force, Ghostbusters new and old must join forces to protect their home and save the world from a second Ice Age.

## Dune: Part Two

Continuing the Dune saga, the film explores the mythic journey of Paul Atreides (Timothée Chalamet) as he unites with Chani (Zendaya) and the Fremen while on a warpath of revenge against the conspirators who destroyed his family. Facing a choice between the love of his life and the fate of the known universe, he endeavors to prevent a terrible future only he can foresee. An incredible sci-fi epic – it well surpasses the first part and achieves on every level. “This might be the best sci-fi film we’ve had in many years and will likely be one of the best films of the year,” said Paul Salfen of AFMF Magazine

## Navalny

Shot as the story unfolded, the film is a fly-on-the-wall documentary thriller about anti-authoritarian Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Recovering in Berlin after nearly being poisoned to death with the nerve agent Novichok, he makes shocking discoveries about the assassination attempt and bravely decides to return home – whatever the consequences.

## Some Like It Hot

After witnessing a Mafia murder, slick saxophone player Joe (Tony Curtis) and his long-suffering buddy Jerry (Jack Lemmon) improvise a quick plan to escape from Chicago with their lives. Disguising themselves as women, they join an all-female jazz band and hop a train bound for sunny Florida. While Joe pretends to be a millionaire to win the band’s sexy singer, Sugar (Marilyn Monroe), Jerry finds himself pursued by a real millionaire (Joe E. Brown) as things heat up and the mobsters close in.

### Letters Policy

Deadline for letters is 6 p.m. Monday. Submission does not guarantee publication. Letters should be no longer than 300 words (shorter letters are more likely to be published).

Letters may be edited for clarity, grammar, civility and space constraints. The News Review may add a comment from the editor if deemed necessary.

All letters must include the letter writer's name, physical address, and telephone number. Only the name will be published; the News Review will consider requests for the name to be withheld.



Greenbelt Cinema  
129 Centerway  
301-329-2034  
[www.greenbeltcinema.org](http://www.greenbeltcinema.org)  
Members Always \$6.50!  
Member kids are always FREE!  
Adults \$9, Kids \$6,  
Senior/Student/Military \$8  
All shows before 5 PM:  
Adults \$7, Kids \$5  
OC = Open Captions  
CC = Closed Captions  
DVS = Descriptive Video Service

**SHOWTIMES:**  
**MARCH 22nd - 28th**

**Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire** (PG-13) (CC) (DVS) (2024) (125 mins)  
**Screen 1** - Main Auditorium  
Fri. 8:00 PM  
Sat. 5:00 PM  
Sun. 12:45 PM (OC)  
Mon. 5:00 PM  
Tues. 7:15 PM  
Thurs. 7:15 PM  
**Screen 2** - The Screening Room  
Fri. 4:45 PM  
Sat. 8:15 PM  
Sun. 4:00 PM  
Mon. 12:45 PM  
Wed. 7:15 PM


**Dune: Part Two** (PG-13) (CC) (DVS) (2024) (146 mins)  
**Screen 1** - Main Auditorium  
Fri. 4:30 PM  
Sat. 8:00 PM  
Sun. 3:30 PM  
Mon. 1:30 PM (OC)  
Wed. 7:00 PM  
**Screen 2** - The Screening Room  
Fri. 7:30 PM  
Sat. 4:45 PM  
Sun. 12:30 PM  
Mon. 3:30 PM  
Tues. 7:00 PM  
Thurs. 7:00 PM

**Navalny** (R) (CC) (DVS) (2022) (98 mins)  
**Screen 1** - Main Auditorium  
Sat. 1:00 PM

**Some Like it Hot** (NR) (1959) (120 mins)  
Film in Focus | Led by Dr. Oliver Gaycken | Capped at 25  
**Screen 2** - The Screening Room  
Mon. 7:00 PM

## Narcissus

Who can tell the difference  
Between the jonquil and the daffodil?  
And which one has the sweeter smell?  
Let it suffice to know one thing -  
That both are harbingers of Spring  
When all is well.





## Greenbelt News Review

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES:  
- Monday 2 p.m. Articles/photos over 700 words, Display ads (not camera ready).  
- Monday 6 p.m. All letters to the editor (300 word limit).  
- Tuesday 2 p.m. Articles/photos under 700 words, photographs not associated with a story.  
- Tuesday 6 p.m. Classified ads and camera-ready display ads.  
- Email submission is available. Hardcopy submissions (delivered by respective deadline) may be mailed to the address above or left in the Co-op grocery store drop box or GNR external office door mail slot, as shown below.  
- Payment must accompany ads except by prior arrangement.  
MAIL SUBSCRIPTION: \$55/year  
Greenbelt Community Center at 15 Crescent Rd.  
OFFICE HOURS: Monday 2 - 4 p.m., Tuesday 2 - 4, 6 - 8 p.m.  
Office is currently closed to the public. Please phone or email.  
GNR external office door mail slot is located up a few stairs 25 yards left of the Community Center's east door near the municipal building.



**THE NDC NEEDS YOUR VOLUNTEER TIME ON COMMITTEES. Contact: [jbelltower@yahoo.com](mailto:jbelltower@yahoo.com). We promise: It won't hurt!**



Women's History Month

Library Programs on Women:  
The Civil War to the New Deal

On Tuesday, March 26 at 6:30 p.m., those 13 and older can join a virtual conversation with author Robert C. Plumb called *The Better Angels: Five Women Who Changed Civil War America*. His collective biography traces the awakening of five remarkable women (Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Clara Barton, Julia Ward Howe and Sarah Josepha Hale) to analyze how their experiences shaped their responses to the challenges, disappointments and joys they encountered on their missions. Surmounting social and political obstacles, they emerged before and during the worst crisis in American history, the Civil War. Their actions influenced the lives of millions and illuminated a new way forward for the nation.

This special presentation arranged by the Greenbelt Library is in honor and celebration of Women's History Month. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/10050737](http://pgcmls.info/event/10050737).

St. Hugh's Seeks Help  
With Student Dinner

The St. Hugh's Parish Sodality hosts an annual Taste of Home event serving a home-cooked meal for Catholic University of Maryland students at the campus Catholic Student Center. This year's dinner will be on Wednesday, April 3.

The Sodality is seeking volunteers to make a menu item. For more information, to check out the menu or to sign up for a food contribution, call or text Cindy at 301-821-5967.

**Obituaries**

The News Review publishes obituaries of Greenbelt residents, past or present.

You write it or we will if you prefer. There is no charge.

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
OF GREENBELT  
MASS**

**Sunday 10:00 a.m.**  
**City Council Room**  
**25 Crescent Rd**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

OR - Join us on ZOOM!  
For ZOOM link:  
[CCG1985+ownere@groups.io](https://ccg1985+ownere@groups.io)

**Greenbelt  
BAPTIST  
CHURCH**

Christ-centered  
Biblical  
& Reformed

Sunday Morning Worship 10:30am

Sunday School 9:15am

Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00pm

101 Greenhill Rd. Greenbelt, MD  
[www.greenbeltbaptist.org](http://www.greenbeltbaptist.org)

**Woman Behind the New Deal**

An informative six-panel display highlighting the life and accomplishments of Frances Perkins is on display at the Greenbelt Library through Saturday, March 30, generously loaned by the Frances Perkins Center. As Franklin D. Roosevelt's secretary of labor and the first woman to hold a cabinet position, Perkins played a pivotal role in shaping the New Deal era. Credited with formulating policies that revitalized the national economy during one of its most severe crises, she is celebrated for her efforts in establishing the foundations of the modern middle class. Perkins' remarkable journey from modest beginnings in New England to becoming America's foremost advocate for industrial safety and workers' rights is a testament to her resilience and determination.

Prayer Group Meets  
Tuesdays, All Welcome

A contemplative prayer group meets on Tuesdays at the Greenbelt Community Church, United Church of Christ, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. This is a time to pray in silence for oneself, others and the world. It nurtures inner and outer peace and reinforces the oneness of all people and creation.

The format for this group is an opening introduction, 30 minutes of silence and then some sharing. All are welcome to attend from all denominations and faith traditions. For more information, contact Patience Robbins at [patience.robbins@gmail.com](mailto:patience.robbins@gmail.com).



"Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path." – Bahá'u'lláh

**Greenbelt Bahá'í Community**

[www.greenbeltbahais.org](http://www.greenbeltbahais.org)

**St. John's Episcopal Church**

11040 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20704  
301-937-4292 [www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org](http://www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org)

Welcomes you each Sunday for  
Worship & Sunday School  
at 10:00 AM

**"While It Was Yet Dark"  
Resurrection Happens**

Join Us for Holy Week

Palm Sunday	March 24, 10:15 am
Maundy Thursday	March 28, 7 pm
Sunrise Service	March 31, 7am
Easter Sunday	March 31, 10:15 am

**Greenbelt Community Church United Church of Christ**  
1 Hillside Road  
Rev. Clara Young

**Palm Sunday**  
March 23 5pm Vigil Mass  
March 24 Sunday Masses:  
8, 9:30, and  
11am *live streamed on FB*

**Confessions**  
Wednesday March 27 11am to noon

**Holy Thursday**  
Mass of the Lord's Supper  
March 28 7:30pm  
*live streamed on FB*

**Good Friday**  
March 29  
Noon: Stations with the  
Confirmandi  
2pm: Traditional Stations of  
the Cross  
7:30pm Liturgy of the Lord's  
Passion  
*live streamed on FB*

**Easter Sunday**  
March 30 8pm,  
The Vigil of Easter  
*live streamed on FB*  
March 31: 8, 9:30, and 11am  
Sunday Masses

**Saint Hugh  
Catholic Church**

**Holy Week and the  
Paschal Triduum**

135 Crescent Rd.  
[sthughofgrenoble.org](http://sthughofgrenoble.org)

**Easter Sunrise Service  
At Buddy Attick Park**

An ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service will be held at Buddy Attick Park on Sunday, March 31 at 7 a.m. Bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on. The rain location will be the Greenbelt Community Church, at Hillside and Crescent Roads.

Congratulations to the Greenbelt educators who won this year's Advisory Committee on Education awards: Stephanie Abuelhawa, Byron Snowden, Judith Barrera, Mercy Faeldonia, Kristen Ransome and Ivy Wilcher.

Congratulations to Cecilia Hass who was selected to perform with the Junior Maryland All State Orchestra.

Send details of your news to [editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com](mailto:editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com).

The Bible Says...

**Lent-Week #6**

For the wages of sin is death,  
but the free gift of God is eternal life  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Romans 6:23

**Sunday Worship Services**  
10a-11:15a @ Greenbelt Elementary School  
(66 Ridge Rd.)  
**MCFcc.org**

**Mishkan Torah Congregation**

10 Ridge Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770  
Rabbi Saul Oresky, Cantor Phil Greenfield

*An unpretentious, historic, welcoming, liberal, egalitarian synagogue that respects tradition and becomes your extended family in the 21st century.*

Friday evening services at 8:00pm  
Saturday morning services at 10:00am  
Offering hybrid services, online and in-person activities  
For further information, call (301) 474-4223 [www.mishkantorah.org](http://www.mishkantorah.org)  
Affiliated with these movements: Conservative and Reconstructing Judaism

**Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church**

3215 Powder Mill Road, Adelphi  
Phone: 301-937-3666 [www.pbuuc.org](http://www.pbuuc.org)

*Welcomes you to our open, nurturing community*

March 24, 2024 at 3:00 pm  
**Reconstituting the World**

Rev. Ann Kadlecsek with Liturgist Elizabeth Porter

On this first Sunday of spring, let's explore the core value of "transformation" in this faith and in our lives.

Streaming to our Facebook page, on Zoom and in person at 3:00 at:  
University Christian Church, 6800 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville, MD

**College Park United Methodist Church  
Mowatt Memorial UMC**

**LENT SEASON**

It is a time of self-examination and reflection on God's infinite love.

**Lenten Bible study**

7:00 p.m - 8:30 p.m  
Wednesdays  
thru March 20th

Prior to our bible study at 6 pm, we will host a light communal meal that consist of soup, bread, and a drink prepared by our Community Meals Chef, Chris Hough.

This six-week bible touches on the experiences of several individuals around Jesus in his final days, focusing on a new life and redemption rather than loss.

9601 Rhode Island Av, College Park MD

**Saturday Egg-stravaganza**

1 p.m - 2:30 pm

Kids pre-K through 5th grade are invited for a fun-filled Easter egg hunt on Saturday, March 30th.

Mowatt Memorial UMC, 40 Ridge Rd, Greenbelt MD

**Maundy Thursday, Mar 28th**

7 p.m

We will worship the Lord through reflection, song, and communion.

Mowatt Memorial UMC, 40 Ridge Rd, Greenbelt MD

**Good Friday, Mar 29th**

7 p.m

During this service, we will remember the passion and death of Jesus. The gradual extinguishing of the candles is accompanied by prayer, hymns, and reading from Scripture.

Mowatt Memorial UMC, 40 Ridge Rd, Greenbelt MD

**Easter Sunday**

10 a.m

Invite a friend to join us on Easter Sunday service as we celebrate God's gift of new life!

Mowatt Memorial UMC, 40 Ridge Rd, Greenbelt MD





# City Information & Events

The strength of Greenbelt is diverse people living together in a spirit of cooperation. We celebrate all people. By sharing together all are enriched. We strive to be a respectful, welcoming community that is open, accessible, safe and fair.

## GREENBELT CITY CALENDAR

Be sure to check out the City calendar for all up to date events at [www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar).



## COMMITTEES & BOARDS VACANCIES VOLUNTEER TODAY!

Volunteering for City of Greenbelt Committees & Boards is an excellent opportunity to engage with your community and make a difference. Choose from a number of committees & boards such as the **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee, or the Advisory Committee on Education, Arts Advisory Board, Board of Elections, Community Relations Advisory Board, Employee Relations Advisory Board, Forest Preserve Advisory Board, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability, or the Park and Recreation Advisory Board** and make a difference in Greenbelt!

By dedicating your time and expertise, you will help shape the future of Greenbelt and create a community that values the voices of all its residents. Take the first step towards making a positive impact and apply for one of these committee vacancies today!  
Call (301) 474-8000.

## ARTFUL AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

**Create Paper Cutouts Inspired by Henri Matisse with Artist Barbara Combs**  
Sunday, April 7, 1-3 pm, Community Center GFE - Details <https://bit.ly/3TfSoKl>.  
Sunday, April 14, 1-3 pm, Springhill Lake Recreation Center, 6101 Cherrywood Ln - Details <https://bit.ly/3VfZOLq>.

## WELCOME KITS

The City of Greenbelt's Public Information Office is now accepting items (e.g., flyers, pens, calendars, maps, postcards, brochures, tchotchkes, etc.) to be added to the 2024 Welcome Kit for new Greenbelt residents. If you want to include any information about your business, club, or organization, please send 200 promotional items to  
25 Crescent Road  
Greenbelt, MD 20770  
by Friday, April 19.  
Contact [candrews@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:candrews@greenbeltmd.gov).

## BRING YOUR OWN BAG ORDINANCE

Effective January 1, 2024, the City of Greenbelt's Bring Your Own Bag bill aims to reduce single-use plastic bag waste and litter in our local waterways and tributary system.  
The Bring Your Own Bag bill will prohibit a retail establishment from providing a plastic carryout bag to shoppers and can charge at least 10 cents for each paper bag provided to a customer at the point of sale.  
Visit [www.greenbeltmd.gov/BYOBag](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/BYOBag).



## GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL - REGULAR MEETING

Monday, March 25, 2024 at 7:30 pm

### ORGANIZATION

Call to Order  
Roll Call  
Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag  
Petitions and Requests  
Consent Agenda - Approval of Staff Recommendations (Items on the Consent Agenda [marked by \*] will be approved as recommended by staff, subject to removal from the Consent Agenda by Council.)  
Approval of Agenda and Additions

### COMMUNICATIONS

**Presentations**  
- Arbor Day Proclamation  
- Award of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Award for FY2024 Budget  
- Proposed FY 2025 Budget Presentation  
\* Minutes of Council Meetings  
- Administrative Reports  
\* Committee Reports  
- Advisory Planning Board Report: PGCMLS Storywalk Grant Implementation

### LEGISLATION

### OTHER BUSINESS

- Springhill Lake Recreation Center Renovation  
- Red-Light Cameras Contract Agreement  
- Ballfield Improvements ARPA Project - Schrom Hills Park Multi-Purpose Field / Braden Complex Fields #1 & #2  
- ARPA Status Update  
- Council Activities  
- Council Reports  
\* Meetings  
\* Stakeholders  
\* Re/Appointment to Advisory Board  
\* Letter - TheBus Proposed Spring Service Changes  
\* Municipal Building Finance Department Renovations

In advance, the hearing impaired is advised to use MD RELAY at 711 to submit your questions/comments or contact the City Clerk at (301) 474-8000 or email [banderson@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:banderson@greenbeltmd.gov).

## MEETINGS FOR MARCH 25 - 29

Tuesday, March 26 at 3:30 pm, **SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**, On the Agenda: Approval of February Minutes, Discussion on Not for Seniors Only Event Planned for June

Tuesday, March 26 at 7 pm, **ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**, On the Agenda: Minutes of February 28, Debrief on Education Awards from 3/11, Discussion/Planning Student Awards - Nominations Due 4/8

Tuesday, March 26 at 7:30 pm, **GREEN ACES AND GREEN TEAM**, On the Agenda: Biodiesel Updates, Streetlights Recommendation to Use Tanko for Feasibility Study, Mow Less April?, Bottle Bill Update, Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance Update, Curbside Compost Pickup Grant Updates, Electronics and Styrofoam Recycling & Shredding Event Discussion

Wednesday, March 27 at 7:30 pm, **WORK SESSION - OVERVIEW, REVENUES & GENERAL GOVERNMENT/OTHER FUNDS/NON-DEPARTMENTAL & FUND TRANSFERS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Thursday, March 28 at 7 pm, **FOREST PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD**, On the Agenda: Planning for Green Man Festival Outreach Exhibit, Stewardship Activities, Buddy Attick Park Master Plan, Discuss Possible Meetings - ACT, Park Rangers, GHI Woodlands Committee, Greenbriar PReserve Discussion on Outreach to Condos and ERHS

In advance, the hearing impaired is advised to use MD RELAY at 711 to submit your questions/comments or contact the City Clerk at (301) 474-8000 or email [banderson@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:banderson@greenbeltmd.gov). This schedule is subject to change. For confirmation that a meeting is being held call (301) 474-8000. For information on public participation for the meetings above, visit the meetings calendar at [www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar).

## FREE PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION

### UPCOMING PRODUCE DISTRIBUTIONS

MARCH 21, APRIL 18, & MAY 16  
TWO LOCATIONS

**Community Center Ground Floor East:** 1 pm, while supplies last. Open to all Greenbelt residents. **Must have a registration card** via Brendy Garcia at (240) 424-0302 or [bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov).

**Springhill Lake Recreation Center:** 3 - 4:15 pm, registration required. For Greenbelt West residents only. Register via email [bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov).

## GREENBELT RECREATION'S SPRING ACTIVITY GUIDE

[www.greenbeltmd.gov/activityguide](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/activityguide)

Registration currently open. Sign-up today before classes fill.



## PINK PANTRY EVENT

APRIL 3, 10 AM - 12 PM

This quarterly program assists low-income Greenbelt residents to access free menstrual products. **Registration is mandatory and must be completed by March 27.**

To register for this event, please utilize the provided link below: <https://forms.gle/qXFVkvYYVBFgsqSLf8>.

Contact Brendy Garcia at (240) 424-0302 or [bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov).

**ITEMS INCLUDE:**  
WIPES  
PADS  
TAMPONS



## NATIONAL BIKE TO WORK DAY 2024

MAY 17, 6:30 - 8:30 AM

Parking Lot of Greenbelt Aquatic & Fitness Center, 101 Centerway

Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association invites you to join over 16,000 area commuters for a celebration of bicycling as a fun, eco-friendly, low-cost commuting option and it provides both physical and mental health benefits. The Greenbelt Pit Stop will be one of 100 Pit stops in the regional area.

Register at [biketoworkmetrodc.org](http://biketoworkmetrodc.org):  
Pit Stop Manager: Di Quynn Reno, [dquynnreno@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:dquynnreno@greenbeltmd.gov) (240) 542-2053.



## WEED WARRIORS: INVASIVE PLANT PULL

### MARCH 23, 10 AM - 1 PM

Buddy Attick Park, 555 Crescent Road

Be a part of the community effort to remove invasive plant species from the environment at Buddy Attick Park. Volunteers will work with Public Works staff to remove invasive vines from native trees and to pull other invasive plant species.

Register by email at [kdricoll@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:kdricoll@greenbeltmd.gov).

## PARENT & BABY WELLNESS FAIR

April 3, 10 am - 12 pm

Springhill Lake Recreation Center, 6101 Cherrywood Lane

Must register by March 27.

Fair includes health screenings, diapers & other giveaways, nutritional education, period products, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) education, pediatric CPR training, and more.

Contact Brendy Garcia at [bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov) or call (240) 424-0302.

Register at <https://forms.gle/jpdsDQFg46d9C3At9>.



## CURRENT CARES PROGRAMS

CARES is happy to provide the following programs FREE of charge:

- March Emergency Diaper Program
- Parent & Baby Wellness Fair  
April 3, 10 am - 12 pm, Springhill Lake Recreation Center (see ad above)
- Pink Pantry Event  
April 3, 10 am - 12 pm, Springhill Lake Recreation Center (see ad above)
- Produce Distribution at the Greenbelt Community Center, Ground Floor East, 15 Crescent Road  
Upcoming Dates: March 21, April 18, May 16, from 1 - 3 pm
- Produce Distribution at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center, 6101 Cherrywood Ln (Greenbelt West Residents Only)  
Upcoming Dates: March 21, April 18, May 16, from 3 - 4:15 pm

For descriptions and information, visit [www.greenbeltmd.gov/CARESPROGRAMS](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/CARESPROGRAMS).

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION

Volunteers are needed every third Thursday of the month at the Spring Hill Lake Recreation Center & the Greenbelt Community Center. Volunteers will assist with setting up tables, sorting and organizing fresh fruits and vegetables, and distributing them to families in need.

**Springhill Lake Recreation Center Volunteers** - For information, contact Katherine Farzin (240) 524-2019.  
To register, please use the link: <https://forms.gle/AqNxCARjwioCntWf9>.

**Greenbelt Community Center Volunteers** - For more information, contact Flora Li (301) 412-2480.

## GREENBELT ARPA GRANT PROGRAMS

Applications Deadlines Extended Through August 30, 2024

To better assist Greenbelt individuals, families, and businesses affected by COVID-19, Greenbelt's ARPA programs have extended deadlines through the end of the year for grants and other assistance.

Grants include:

**Childcare Vouchers, Healthcare Vouchers, Higher Education Scholarships**  
**First-Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance, Workforce Development**  
**Micro Grants, Tree Canopy Grants**

To view grant programs, or to see how other ARPA programs are helping your community recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, visit [www.engagegreenbelt.org](http://www.engagegreenbelt.org).



COUNCIL continued from page 1



Greenbelt City Council honors the Advisory Committee on Education 2024 Educator Award winners: Ivy Wilcher, Stephanie Abuelhawa, Mercy Faeldonia, Judith Barrera, Kristen Ransome and Byron Snowden.

Proclamations

After the awards ceremony, Mayor Emmett Jordan issued two proclamations, the first designating March 20 Meatout Day, a day encouraging residents to follow a meat-free diet. Vegan residents Barbara Glick and Dan Gillotte attested to the many alternatives to meat available in local stores and restaurants. Jordan pointed out that a wholesome plant-based diet is a worthwhile way of contributing to social justice and environmental causes. Jordan also proclaimed March as Women’s History Month in recognition of the “indispensable” contributions made by women to our nation and our city. The mayor pointed out that, for the first time in its history, city council is a majority woman council.

Charlestowne North

Under Administrative Reports, Liz Park, director of Greenbelt CARES, subbing in for City Manager Josué Salmerón, reported that Tarantino Property Management has agreed to correct all violations at Charlestowne North Apartments within three months. All rents have been collected for March and the elevator is scheduled for repairs.

Budget Nears Completion

Assistant City Manager Timothy George reported that the budget is near completion and council needs to complete its letter to U.S. Representative Glenn Ivey and other members of the federal delegation supporting earmarks for funding that will benefit Greenbelt.

NLC Roadshow

Looking ahead, Jordan noted that on April 15 Greenbelt will be a stop on the National League of Cities (NLC) Roadshow. The NLC Centennial Roadshow: 100 Years, 100 Cities seeks to highlight members, partners and “transformative progress,” visiting 100 cities “to spotlight the unique stories of municipalities and the invaluable relationships they’ve cultivated with NLC.”

Playgrounds and Nature

Councilmember Danielle McKinney requested a future update on seeking a grant for a playground in Franklin Park and also asked if Greenbelt might become a Nature Everywhere City as sponsored by NLC.

General Assembly

Jordan explained that the time has come in the legislative cycle

when bills cross from House to Senate in the Maryland General Assembly. Council unanimously supported a Bottle Bill that will enact 10- and 15-cent refunds on beverage containers, depending on size. A code indicating Maryland will be added to the list of states that use these containers so that reverse vending machines can identify them and provide proper refunds. John Lippert and Tom Taylor from the city’s Green ACES/Green Team spoke in favor of this action.

Credits for PGCPs Employees

Council then supported with amendment a bill proposing that eligible employees in the school system who live outside Prince George’s County could receive a credit against their property taxes to encourage them to move into the county. However, council felt that this proposal is too limited as presently written and that, for example, employees who now rent inside the county should also be made eligible for this credit for first-time purchase of a home.

Traffic Enforcement

Council had already discussed the city’s agreement with Howard County for red light violation cameras that have been installed at Greenbelt intersections since 2011, which is due for renewal. Carrington and Associates, which advises Greenbelt on its relations with other local and state governing bodies, sent a letter to council recently opposing this renewal and suggesting that it can help produce a better contract. Councilmember Rodney Roberts asked Greenbelt Police Chief Richard Bowers for statistics demonstrating the effectiveness of these cameras in reducing accidents, and council agreed to revisit this issue at its next meeting. In a related matter, council discussed a bill that will authorize trained technicians to sign off on tickets created in the city by speed-monitoring cameras in place of police officers. Bowers estimated that some 2,500 tickets are issued each month for speeding and red light violations combined. This bill will free the department’s officers to work more hours on the city’s streets. All members except Roberts voted to support this bill in the Assembly. Council took no action on a proposed bill that will increase fines for speeding in restricted work zones since members felt that proposed

increases anywhere from \$290 to \$1,000 are too punitive on, for example, people who drive for a living. Council unanimously supported a bill that will penalize street racing and exhibition driving but opposed a bill to establish three transportation authorities in the state that members think may provide funds for adding more lanes to certain highways. Even though Jordan pointed out that these new lanes will be used for buses and also light rail transportation in Southern Maryland, resident Michael Hartman warned that these new authorities, once established, will be hard to control and, so, backed Roberts in successfully opposing the proposed bill.

Education Funding

Council also voted to send a letter to the state assembly opposing a proposed bill that, Pompei asserted, will make it easier to move restricted funds out of education. See article on page 7 for more on this.

Land Use

Council decided to take no additional action on a proposed bill that claims to give municipalities more authority in deciding land-use cases, but in fact, Roberts claimed, will only make council a mouthpiece for the county, which now holds most of the power here. Jordan disagreed with Roberts, noting that the bill does give municipalities some additional authority.

Council Hiatus in July

Last, council discussed blocking out a period of two weeks in July when it will hold no meetings to allow its members and city staff to catch up on work such as talking to Greenbelt’s residents and also to plan time off for themselves and their families. Roberts, supported in general by resident Bill Orleans, explained that as a small business owner he cannot afford to take off extended periods of time and, so, opposed this proposal. Responding that the residents of Greenbelt had voted for human beings and not automatons, Councilmember Kristen Weaver persisted in supporting this proposal, which passed and thereby approved a council hiatus with no worksessions during the weeks of July 15 and 22.



Job Fair for New Immigrants, Refugees by Lutheran Services

by Frank Gervasi

“Who here can speak Swahili?” This was announced during the February 29 LSSNCA Job Fair. Located on the 12th floor of 7474 Greenway Center Drive, Lutheran Social Services National Capital Area (LSSNCA) is part of a national charitable organization founded in 1917 to assist immigrants and refugees coming to the U.S.

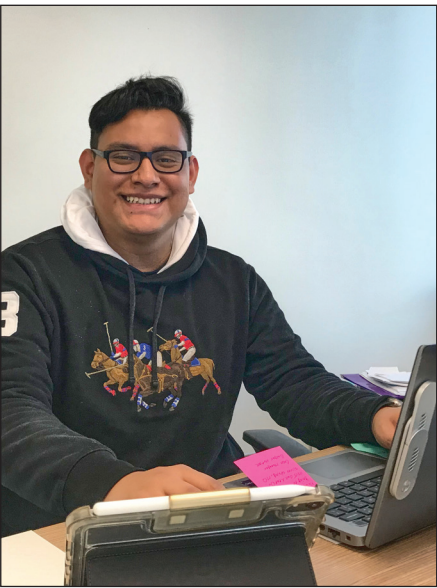
Between 80 and 100 job seekers were present that day taking turns being interviewed by a number of potential employers. “We have contacts with dozens of employers looking for help,” said office manager Jason Chavez. The recent arrivals can also have case managers who will assist them with this as well as other needs, such as signing up for Social Security, a necessity for having legal employment here.

In this area, they have a total of about 250 eligible clients. LSSNCA maintains three facilities in Maryland: Greenbelt, Baltimore and Frederick.

The crowd looked a bit like something one might see in the United Nations. Chavez said, “There are people here from many places – Afghanistan, Central America (including El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala), South Africa, Cameroon and other areas.”

I was there partly to see how the Ukrainian woman recently brought here by the Greenbelt Refugee Aid Committee (GRACE) was doing. GRACE works closely with LSSNCA.

Tetiana, who arrived here in December, had been offered a job at a Goodwill Thrift store, and wondered how she would be able



Jason Chavez, office manager for Lutheran Social Services National Capital Area

to commute there. That brings to mind a pressing issue close to home: Metro contemplating service cuts.

LSSNCA does not bring any immigrants, asylum-seekers, or humanitarian parolees (like Tetiana) to the U.S. They contract with federal and state governments to assist these newcomers in adapting to their new environment. They help people at no charge to them.

The Job Fair was mostly about entry level jobs, important to those with limited English language skills. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are one of the many services LSSNCA helps arrange for their clients.

I didn’t see whether a Swahili speaker was located quickly (one probably was), but I am sure the problem was solved, at least with a translation app. For the Ukrainian, LSSNCA has a native speaker on staff. They are a very effective organization.

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\*apr=annual percentage rate. Rates as low as 8% apr up to 48 months for this unsecured consumer loan. For example: 8% apr would equal a payment of \$24.41per \$1,000 borrowed for 48 months. Rate based on credit qualifications and other restrictions apply.

Second Annual  
**HEIFER FAIR**  
Greenbelt Community Church UCC  
One Hillside Road

Sunday, March 24, 3-5 PM

- Learn about sheep and how their husbandry can lift a family out of poverty
- A visit from a sheep (subject to change)
- Crafts for the kids (nominal fee)
- Bake sale

Proceeds will benefit Heifer International  
[www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)



KNESEL continued from page 1



Amy Knesel with her youngest child

Alliance, and became coordinator of Greenbelt’s Pumpkin Festival in 2017. Securing a grant, she expanded its reach from Old Greenbelt to the Springhill Lake Recreation Center and Schrom Hills Park. Her job as office manager for the Greenbelt Cinema from 2017 to 2023 taught her about the community, fundraising, event organizing, marketing, human resources, customer service and communications and allowed her to get to know a wide range of people who had many different perspectives and needs to balance and fulfill.

Busy raising her three children and with volunteer roles as a Girl Scout leader and secretary of the Labor Day Festival, Knesel wasn’t intending to get directly involved in local politics anytime in the near future, but friends planted the suggestion a couple of years ago. She didn’t think she would be able to add campaigning to her already full plate until later in her life. But she left the cinema job last September and then the shock of Ric Gordon’s loss hit the community and changed everything. With the need for another councilmember, her friend Holly Leon-Lierman said to her, “You need to do this.” It was unexpected, but soon she realized that it felt right.

Conscious of Gordon’s great legacy and the huge responsibility of taking the seat he held, she

### 2024 Boxwood Village Scholarship Now Open

The Boxwood Village Civic Association offers an annual \$500 scholarship to a current Boxwood Village resident. It is available to graduating high school seniors and full-time (at least 12 credit hours per semester) undergraduate students. The scholarship is partially funded through the proceeds from the Boxwood booth at the Greenbelt Labor Day Festival, the annual Boxwood yard sale and other activities.

The application form should be completed and returned by June 30. A scholarship committee comprised of three Boxwood Village residents will choose this year’s recipient. For the application form and further information, email Pat McAndrew at [pmcandrew@mzmlaw.net](mailto:pmcandrew@mzmlaw.net).



asks herself whether the actions she takes and her decisions on council are what Ric would have done. “I recognize fully that ... I did not earn anyone’s votes here ... And so I am going to do my darnedest to prove my worth.”

What does Knesel want to do with the opportunities that have opened up with her new position on the council? She says her guiding principles are “community, accessibility and equity.” One way these values are being expressed is in her work with Coach K to meet the needs of the youth of Franklin Park. Recreation facilities owned by the complex are broken and virtually unusable, surrounded by high fences that have given it the nickname “the cage” among the kids there. “It really does feel like you would have your kids playing in a cage,” says Knesel. “There is NO place for kids to play now.” She praises the alternatives outside Franklin Park, the work of Shaymar Higgs at The SPACE, of the Springhill Lake Recreation Center and Carolyn Lambricht Davis with CHEARS, along with Coach K’s tireless work. She notes that Franklin Park management has made promises to create a new recreation center on their campus. We as a community can make a difference for the young people who some view as problematic, says Knesel.

For council’s future work, she believes that preparing for the arrival of the FBI will be of paramount importance. “We have such an opportunity to grow thoughtfully ... we have four years before the FBI would even be breaking ground,” she says.

When she finds time to relax, Knesel and her family go camping, along with their dog Penny. A favorite getaway is Pocomoke State Park because of its closeness to beautiful Assateague Island.

### Part Two

# Blueprint or Budget-breaker? Maryland’s Education Reform

by Kiersten Hacker, Christina Walker and Ela Jali

*Behind the Blueprint is the Local News Network’s comprehensive report on the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, the 10-year, multi-billion-dollar plan to remake public education in the state. This article, the second of a two-part series, looks at the dilemma of how to fund the Blueprint. The first part appeared in the March 14 issue.*

Cheryl Bost, president of the Maryland State Education Association, said the teachers’ union is fully behind the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

“We have a shared understanding that our goal is for students to succeed academically and become valuable citizens in our state and in our country,” Bost said. “In order to do that, we have to make an investment in public education. I think for the most part, the Blueprint identifies where that money has to go.”

What it doesn’t do, however, is identify where the money will come from. Bost, whose union represents 74,000 educators in the state, acknowledged the concerns about the Blueprint’s cost. But she indicated the increased spending on education is both needed and long overdue.

“We constitutionally have to provide a public education for all students, so the investment is needed,” Bost said. “And when some people balk at, ‘Oh, it’s all this money’ – well, we’ve been starving public education for many years.”

#### The Budget Dilemma

The Blueprint remains fully funded in Governor Wes Moore’s latest Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget proposal, leaving many lawmakers to turn their attention to other legislative issues this year. Bill Ferguson, the Senate president, said in terms of current Blueprint funding, “we’re more than fine.”

But that’s not so in the long term. The cost of implementing the Blueprint is projected to grow from \$1.6 billion in FY 2024 to \$4.1 billion five years later, according to the Department of Legislative Services. Meantime, the state’s structural budget gap is set to balloon every year through 2029 when Legislative Services expects it to be \$2.9 billion and the Moore administration says it will be about \$3.5 billion.

Closing that budget gap will be immensely difficult, said Christopher Summers, president and CEO of the conservative Maryland Policy Institute. He also said the Blueprint should be paused.

“Raising taxes [is] not going to solve this problem, and I think the governor knows that,” said Summers, who has been critical of the Blueprint for years.

The Blueprint calls on school districts to increase education funding too, thereby prompting Summers to say that county budgets face the biggest fiscal threat.

But in Annapolis, lawmakers from both parties acknowledged that the General Assembly will have to make some tough decisions in the years to come as the Blueprint’s bills come due.

“I think we know the reality that we’re facing. And I think there’s gonna be a lot of discussion about that,” said State Senator Guy J. Guzzone, a Democrat from Howard County. “I just don’t know that there’s an immediate answer.”

One obvious solution would be raising taxes to cover the

state’s coming shortfalls. But Senate Minority Leader Stephen Hershey, a Republican from the Eastern Shore, said a solution lies in cutting back the demands of the Blueprint rather than paying for the sweeping overhaul as it stands.

“Republicans have stated very often that we need to move to a ‘Blueprint lite’ or you know, some type of education reform that takes some of the important components of the Blueprint, but at the same time is affordable and allows counties to make decisions on which parts of the Blueprint are more meaningful in each of their public school systems,” Hershey said.

Democrats, however, back the current Blueprint, despite its cost. Delegate Ben Barnes, a Democrat who chairs the Appropriations Committee, said legislators should start talking about a long-term payment plan for the Blueprint now. The shared values between the legislature and the governor will bring them together, Barnes said, to solve the Blueprint budget dilemma.

“This legislature, the governor, we share values, and those shared values include all the priorities of the Blueprint,” Barnes said. “Getting to children who live in communities of poverty, taking care of special needs students, I mean, these are what we all ran on. And so I feel confident we’ll find the revenue we need to support that program.”

Several state officials have said they are looking to the

See **BLUEPRINT**, page 11



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COUNTY continued from page 1

expensive plan to improve public education in Maryland. Among other things, it requires increases in funding for education in county budgets. County Executive Angela Alsobrooks wants to cut the county’s current earmarks to help pay for that. Supporters of removing the earmarks argue that what the county currently spends on education should be able to count toward the required spending for the Blueprint. Alsobrooks, who is currently running for U.S. Senate, says she wants greater flexibility in how to use funds as the county prepares to face a projected \$171 million deficit.

Meanwhile, the Prince George’s County Board of Education, rarely united on anything, unanimously opposes the removal of the earmarks for education. Superintendent Millard House II told lawmakers the consequences of redirecting the taxes would be “catastrophic” and that removal of the funding the school district has been able to count on could mean deep cuts to programs and the loss of “hundreds of jobs.” In a letter to delegates, House warned that the loss of those funding sources could mean cuts to disability and mental health services. At a committee meeting, Delegate Ben Barnes countered, “These are the things the Blueprint mandates. They cannot cut Special Ed.”

Cutting current educational funding to pay for the required increases in spending on education goes against the spirit of the Blueprint argue those opposed to the bills; but Alsobrooks and supporters say the county is already doing more than necessary to fund education and should get credit for that.

“It makes no sense to take funds that are restricted for education and to unrestrict them,” argued Councilmember Jenni Pompei, when the two bills were brought up at the recent city council meeting, with the recommendation that council support them. Even though the stated intention is to use the funds for the Blueprint, once unrestricted, “They can do whatever they want with that money,” cautioned Pompei. “Frankly, once the Blueprint

is fully implemented in 2031, we’re going to be like, ‘Hey, what happened to all that money that we used to have restricted for education?’ It’s going to be gone,” she warned. The Blueprint says we shouldn’t be using that money, argues Pompei, who says its goal is not to “pilfer money from our operational budget” but to increase funding.

The bills landed in the councilmembers’ packets last week with a recommendation to support them. Following Pompei’s statements in opposition to the bills, Mayor Emmett Jordan recommended taking no action. Councilmember Rodney Roberts asked whose recommendation it was that council support it, and at that point, Assistant City Manager Timothy George apologized and said the staff recommendation was to either take no action or to oppose it. Robert Snyder, of Greenbelt’s Advisory Committee on Education (ACE), said the committee had not taken up this legislation but agreed it would be better to “not support a flawed bill.” Ultimately, city councilmembers unanimously opposed the two bills and will be writing a letter to Prince George’s County Council to that effect (for more on the city council meeting, see page 1).

Whatever the outcomes of these bills, with costs for the Blueprint set to rise annually, the earmarked money is not a long-term solution to funding it (see Blueprint or Budget-breaker? in the March 14 issue and page 7 of this issue).

It was noted at the council meeting that Prince George’s County Municipal Association is taking no stand on these bills, which are sponsored by the Prince George’s County Delegation and strongly advocated for by the county executive but equally strongly opposed by Prince George’s County Board of Education. The county teachers’ union (Prince George’s County Educators’ Association) opposes the bills. Both draft bills passed the House this month and are currently before the Senate for first reading. If passed they would take effect July 1.

DKFI Parents Respond to Plans To Move the School to Goddard

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

On Monday, March 11, Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) leaders presented a plan to move Dora Kennedy French Immersion (DKFI) to the Robert Goddard school in Lanham (see the March 14 issue). The community had learned at the start of February that the school was being moved to Kenmoor Middle School in Landover. The new plan took them by surprise again.

A Pivot

“One month ago, it was only Kenmoor and then tonight it’s only Robert Goddard,” said Becky Fleeson, a DKFI parent who lives in Cheverly. “We seem to have pivoted and really firmly,” she said. Parents objected to having no input on the Goddard plan. Greenbelt resident and father of three DKFI students John McElhenny told administrators, “There’s a trust issue on our end.”

Chief Operating Officer Charoscar Coleman responded that if they had more options it would be a “more robust conversation,” but they have only two – Kenmoor Middle School or Robert Goddard. The need to move is not only because Springhill Lake Elementary needs a swing space, he assured families, but because of the conditions of the building, which were outlined 10 years ago, he noted.

Building Updates

McElhenny accused the administration of trying to “ram this through” and providing incomplete information. He asked for “concrete proof” of the conditions of the three schools. McElhenny came prepared with PGCPS facilities structural assessments, including one of Kenmoor Middle School conducted November 2022, with an overall assessment of “fair” and “poor”; a February 2023 assessment of Robert Goddard as “fair”; and one of DKFI’s building from December 2022 that resulted in a “satisfactory” assessment (the category above “fair”) and an inspector’s note that “building appears to be in overall good condition.”

Director of Building Services Samuel Stefanelli asserted that Goddard had been “completely rebuilt over the last five years.” He warned DKFI’s current building could have a critical failure at any time. They have a plumber at the school every day, he said, and noted two bathrooms had been closed all year. “There’ll be a point where I’m not going to be able to [have guys come in and put things back together]

and we’re going to have to close the school. Right now, Dr. Coleman’s got no place to put you,” said Stefanelli, who said he talks about finding a place for DKFI every fall because “this building is going to fail.” Coleman said that the Facility Condition Index (FCI) assessments by the state produced a 68.76 percent score for DKFI’s building and 56.41 percent for Kenmoor, with the building getting a lower score the better condition it is in. (No FCI was shared for Robert Goddard, but a report from 2015 showed a 68.51 percent, comparable to DKFI’s prior to significant repairs and replacements.)

Parent Sarah Parker presented a very different opinion to most, saying, “I can’t get out of this building fast enough.... Every time I come into the classroom to volunteer, I’m frankly horrified my child has to spend their day in this environment.” The first-grade classroom has an air-conditioning unit in the window in February because it’s so hot, she shared. She responded to fellow parent Delvin Champagne’s caution that moving students could impact their achievement, saying, “Maybe, actually, if kids didn’t sit in 80-degree weather in February the test results would be even better.” She said she was very perplexed by her fellow parents’ attachment to the city and the building, as she has zero attachment to either.

Capacity Concerns

PGCPS administrators said further modular buildings will be added to the Robert Goddard site to accommodate students when the schools are co-located. Fleeson told them, “If my students are only going to be in modular buildings on a different campus and that’s the end of your solution for my students, I feel like that’s subpar.” Coleman clarified that modulares are considered additions to the school, rather than temporaries and Director of Capital Programs Shawn Matlock said the modulares have a 50-year lifespan and would be wired to the main building.

Parent Briana Gable was concerned that DKFI’s growth would be capped in the shared space. She wanted to know if children would need to be registered at younger ages to limit entrance at kindergarten and feared that could lead to disenfranchisement for working families. (Robert Goddard begins enrollment at age 3 and doesn’t accept children at kindergarten unless they have

previous Montessori experience.) Gable suggested state and federal funding for historic buildings, saying, “This school needs to grow, not be capped in size.”

Concerns for Identity

Another parent asserted, “It is virtually impossible for any institution to find its identity in a co-sharing space.... I guarantee you that we cannot have a full identity in a shared house.” He asked for the school to remain where it is for four years until a space is found for them, warning that co-location would be the “beginning of the collapse of the French immersion program that has taken decades and decades to build.” Concerns about identity and French language immersion in a shared space were echoed by DKFI’s Registrar Lee Wright (for more of her comments see the March 14 issue).

Traffic Concerns

Rachel Noyce, parent of two DKFI students, hoped to stay in the current building, believing it is solid and could be fixed, and calling the need to permanently move a “questionable assertion.” Yet, if they had to move, Robert Goddard might be the best location, she said. Her concern was with traffic for drop-off and pick-up, something she described as “a nightmare” that took her an hour in the morning and evening when her daughters were at preschool there. She asked about plans for parking, the single long driveway, and any plans to improve the situation if over 1,000 students were there. It was a concern echoed by Wright who said she had to get to work an hour early to deal with the “horrible” driveway situation and get a parking space when DKFI was located at Goddard previously.

Lack of Equity

Many parents complained of a lack of equity for their students, who they saw as being treated as less important than students in local schools or other specialty programs like Talented and Gifted (TAG). Fleeson said DKFI students “are not being considered equivocally with the students who go to regular or neighborhood schools.”

Champagne, the parent of three students charged, “You would not try this over at Glenarden Woods. You wouldn’t even dare go in the school and whisper it. They would tear the school board down. So, why are we standing for it, guys?”

See DKFI, page 11



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# Police Blotter

Incidents reported here occurred March 11-17, 2024. Readers are encouraged to contact the police if they have information that may aid in an enquiry. Call the non-emergency number 301-474-7200 or email [pd@greenbeltnmd.gov](mailto:pd@greenbeltnmd.gov). Times provided are when the incidents were reported.

Greenbelt Police Department reported three domestics, two with arrests and one with a mental health diversion; one sexual assault; five mental health diversions including four attempted suicides, one involving a drug overdose in which officers provided basic lifesaving practices until medical personnel arrived; and one overdose in which a juvenile ingested controlled dangerous substances. Officers administered Narcan and performed CPR until medical personnel arrived. A missing person case of a man who went missing in West Virginia was resolved when he was found in Pennsylvania.

### Assault

On March 14 at 2:42 p.m. near 5831 Cherrywood Terrace, women were fighting; one used a hammer to strike and injure two others and a large glass window was broken.

On March 17 at 8:38 p.m. near 6200 Breezewood Drive, two roommates fought; one was pushed down so his head struck the floor.

### Burglary

On March 12 at 11:16 a.m. near 7001 Mathew Street, a man was seen entering a home, but when the police arrived, he was gone. The police collected evidence, and a witness reported he saw suspects leave in a gray vehicle and provided the tag information.

### DUI Arrest

On March 12 at 9:11 a.m. near 9230 Springhill Lane, a vehicle struck multiple parked cars. Officers located the vehicle and driver who failed field sobriety testing and was arrested for DUI.

### Trespassing

On March 13 at 8:52 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a woman who had been banned from the premises created a disturbance inside a store. She was removed and issued a criminal citation.

On March 15 at 2:52 p.m. near 5800 Cherrywood Terrace, a vacant unit had the lock broken. Inside officers found personal belongings and a dog. All of the items and the dog were safely removed.

### Theft

On March 11 at 4:57 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a shoplifter trying to flee with merchandise was issued a criminal citation and all items were recovered. At 10:41 p.m. near 6040 Greenbelt Road, an iPad left at a restaurant was stolen.

On March 13 at 11:01 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a repeat shoplifter stole an espresso machine. Loss prevention confirmed the suspect's identity using his MVA photo and staff testimony. Officers filed for charges with the Hyattsville Commissioner's Office.

On March 14 near 7800 Hanover Parkway, Amazon packages were stolen from a residence. Near 6100 Greenbelt Road, store cameras recorded a shoplifter stealing multiple items on three separate dates; the suspect was identified and charges are pending. At 10:14 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a known suspect took merchandise without paying.

On March 16 at 4:17 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a man stole several items.

On March 17 at 2:43 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, an employee gave information about a theft suspect who left prior to officers' arrival.

### Fraud

On March 13 near 7565 Greenbelt Road, a woman working in a bank was arrested on suspicion of being involved in an ongoing fraud case. Prince George's Police Department Financial Crimes Office will continue the investigation.

On March 17 at 2:41 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a woman received a call from her employer instructing her to buy gift cards for a coworker.

### Vehicle Crimes

No vehicles were reported stolen this week.

### Theft from Auto and Vandalism

On March 12 near 9100 Edmonston Court, a 2017 Ford work van had a broken window; work equipment and tools were stolen. On March 13 near 6203

Springhill Drive, a 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee had a broken window and some change stolen. On March 14 near 8007 Mandan Road, rims and tires were stolen from a 2019 Honda Pilot; and near 6227 Springhill Court, a 2021 Jeep Compass had a window shattered and was rummaged through.

On March 14 near 9154 Springhill Court, a 2024 Toyota RAV4 had the rear windshield broken by a rock; near 9011 Breezewood Terrace, a 2015 Chevrolet Traverse had a window smashed by a brick; near 7819 Mandan Road, a 2019 Toyota Highlander was defaced by a group of juveniles with mud, grass and food, leaving a damaged tail light.

On March 15 near 7927 Mandan Road, a Honda Civic had the airbag stolen; near 7501 Greenway Center Drive, a rear license plate was stolen. On March 16 near 5919 Cherrywood Terrace, a 2023 Toyota Sienna had a window broken; near 145 Westway, a man reported his tags stolen, but they had been confiscated by Parking Enforcement.

## Shooting Leaves Bullet in Closet

On Wednesday, March 13, at approximately 9:20 p.m., officers responded to the 7800 block of Jacobs Drive for a non-contact shooting. A bullet had passed through the siding and outer wall of a townhome and was located inside a closet. There were no known injuries and no suspects at this time. This does not appear to be a targeted shooting, according to the police.



## FBI continued from page 1

Greenbelt in FY 2025 appears to be a motion toward confirmation of the Greenbelt site. In December 2023 former president and current presidential candidate Donald Trump called for the headquarters to remain in the capital. (Trump's personal involvement in meetings and his influence upon site selection was the subject of a previous investigation by the Department of Justice Inspector General, which determined there was no evidence of undue influence upon the FBI Director Christopher Wray.)

### Planning for Construction

The overview included within the FY 2025 Budget Request notes that the FBI has occupied the J. Edgar Hoover (JEH) building since 1974, and that its infrastructure has deteriorated. "The Administration recognizes the critical need for a new FBI headquarters and has begun a multi-year process of constructing a modern, secure facility from which the FBI can continue its mission to protect the American people," it reads. The Greenbelt site is planned to serve at least 7,500 FBI personnel.

"The FBI identified serious concerns with the site selection process, and Congress and the GSA Office of Inspector General are conducting independent reviews of the process. While these

reviews take place, the FBI and GSA are engaged in construction planning efforts," states the Budget Request Summary.

### Up-front Funding

The funds for the project are slated to come from the Federal Capital Revolving Fund (FCRF), which is intended "to fully fund the costs of very large civilian real property capital projects that are difficult to accommodate in the annual appropriations process." Thus the \$3.5 billion allocation will fund the total project upfront, to be "repaid" using annual discretionary appropriations over 15 years, states the summary. "For the FBI suburban headquarters campus, the Budget proposes a \$3.5 billion allocation from the FCRF," it says, "to be repaid by the Federal Buildings Fund in 15 annual amounts of \$233 million. The FCRF funding would be paired with \$645 million in GSA prior year appropriations to support the acquisition and construction of the FBI's new suburban headquarters campus."

### Additional New D.C. Site

The Budget Summary for the FBI also states that they will attempt to identify a downtown D.C. site for 750 to 1,000 personnel to be close to the Department of Justice and other law enforcement and government partners in the capital.



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

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DKFI continued from page 8

(Glenarden Woods is also a specialty school. It is a designated TAG school for grades two to five. Its original building was constructed in 1957 but has since had a major addition and complete renovation.)

Parent Ellen Moll said she feared the school had an elitist reputation. It isn't an elitist school, she said. She spoke of the time, grants and beautification projects that the community has put into the buildings and grounds.

Kateri Baker, Greenbelt resident and parent of three children at DKFI, said she understood PGCPs had to look at neighborhood schools and overcrowding first but asked how Glenarden Woods had funding for their building to be renovated. "Their building is beautiful," she said. "They are a program like we are a program. I think a lot of us just want a long-term idea if we're ever on a list to have a home, to have a permanent solution for our children, to not be moved around every 10 years."

Malaika Nji-Kerber, parent of a kindergartener and a second grader, said she felt there was a lack of equal consideration for DKFI students and respect for families, who are also taxpayers, local residents and voters, she argued. "My students, their students are all being treated as if they don't belong here. As if we are somehow educational migrants, coming from other localities.... We are not. We live here. We pay money here. We put in our time and effort.... We belong here," she told the administration. "You spent 68 million to build Kenmoor a new school.... You spent 30 million at Robert Goddard? Put that 30 million here.... I understand you are not preservationists or conservationists," said Nji-Kerber, referencing a frequently repeated statement of Matlock's, "and I have a problem with that, too, because you know

what? Society is built on history. You keep things that are historical working and functioning and serving the community.... FDR made a New Deal; this is one of the buildings," argued Nji-Kerber, who wants to see the building improved over summer breaks and to continue to house DKFI. "My grandmother used to always say that a hut that you own is better than a mansion you are renting. We want to own our hut!" said Nji-Kerber.

**Lack of Long-Term Planning**

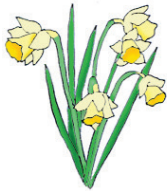
One parent said it makes a lot of sense to her that DKFI cannot stay in the building; one of her children takes a change of outfit every day due to the HVAC problems. She thanked the administration for finding an alternative to the Kenmoor site because coming from Laurel her children are already on the bus for an hour. However, she asked if the administration would consider this not being their permanent solution but instead making DKFI a priority for a new building in six years.

Fleeson also acknowledged problems with the current building's maintenance and condition, sharing that her daughter learned the French for racoon when one fell out of the ceiling and landed in the first-grade classroom. "What was the plan for these students? That should have been answered 10 years ago. You should have known," said Fleeson, to applause. "I want a new school for my students. And I understand that's not in the budget ... but if you had said that 15 years ago surely you could have put it in a budget and said 'in 25 years ...' and that would have been my kid. And if you say, 'it's going to be in 15 or 25 more years,' that's going to be someone's kid. Because this program is a star in Prince George's County Schools."

*The author has two children who attend Dora Kennedy French Immersion School.*

BLUEPRINT continued from page 7

Accountability and Implementation Board to issue recommendations regarding the Blueprint's budget challenges. The board has made policy proposals included in bills that, if passed this legislative session, would make adjustments to the law without



Provide Public Input On New Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public review and comment on a draft proposal and environmental assessment establishing the Southern Maryland Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties. The proposal would conserve up to 40,000 acres in fee-title acquisitions or easements from willing sellers across four watersheds, helping to conserve habitats that support threatened and endangered species, waterfowl and migratory birds of conservation concern. For more information, go to [fws.gov/project/evaluating-new-refuge-lands-southern-maryland](https://fws.gov/project/evaluating-new-refuge-lands-southern-maryland). To support this new wildlife refuge, send email to [FW5southernmarylandplan@fws.gov](mailto:FW5southernmarylandplan@fws.gov) no later than April 22.

changing the finances.

In addition, the board is set to release additional recommendations this legislative session.

"What the AIB has tried to sort of suggest is, let's try to implement it the way it's intended. And if it doesn't work, if it's just no longer the right thing to do, then we need to change it," said Rachel Hise, the board's executive director. "But for many things, we haven't gotten to that point yet."

*Kiersten Hacker, Christina Walker and Ela Jali write for Local News Network, a part of the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism.*

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## ERHS Violinist Cecilia Hass Plays in All State Orchestra

Cecilia Hass, a freshman at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, performed with the Junior Maryland All State Orchestra on March 10 at The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park, along with 116 other 7th, 8th and 9th graders from across the state. Sponsored by the Maryland Music Educators Association (MMEA), admittance for the performance was by audition. Hass was the only student from Prince George’s County who was accepted to participate.

Rehearsal occupied 16 hours on the weekend of the concert with guest conductor Ann Smith from Fort Worth, Texas, resulting in a high-quality and well-polished performance.

“Through their participation in music performing ensembles and intentional development of their



Cecilia Hass

PHOTO BY INGRID COWAN HASS

technical and expressive tools,” MMEA believes, “students develop critical thinking, self-reflection and problem-solving skills which will serve them in their future life pursuits, whether or not those pursuits are musical.”

## Meet Teen Author Jordan Owens

Jordan Owens has published a supernatural thriller at age 15. (See ad on page 7.) The News Review interviewed him with the assistance of his mother, Lissa Owens, who recorded his responses to our questions:

Q: When did you first realize that you wanted to write a book and what was your inspiration? A: When I first saw the great creative works out there and famous writers. Inspiration? I had a lot of ideas in my head that I could create and I wanted to put them on paper.

Q: What advice would you give to a writer working on their first book? A: Even if it feels like you don’t want to do it, because of how much time and effort it takes to put into crafting it, you should try your best to keep going and complete it.

Q: If you could spend a day with another popular au-



Fifteen-year-old author Jordan Owens

PHOTO COURTESY LISSA OWENS

thor, whom would you choose? A: Stephen King.

Q: What would you like your readers to know about you? A: I like to learn new things.

Q: Are you currently working on any new projects? A: Yes. (He smiled, but gave no further details.)

### Women in Greenbelt

## Erin D. Butler Is Finalist For America’s Favorite Teacher

by Madeleine Jepsen

Erin Dougherty Butler, a Greenbelt resident and an English teacher in Gaithersburg Middle School’s special education program, is among 25 finalists for the America’s Favorite Teacher contest. The winner of the nationwide contest, chosen through weekly voting, will appear in Reader’s Digest and win a \$25,000 prize and a trip to Hawaii.

Butler has taught in special education for eight years, six of which were at Gaithersburg Middle School’s Bridge Program for students with social and emotional needs. Through the Bridge Program, these students are able to stay in a self-contained suite of small classes with other Bridge Program students and learn from the same set of teachers throughout middle school.

“We work heavily on choosing healthy coping strategies for when we feel those big feelings, and helping students out of crisis – that’s really the bread and butter of this program,” Butler said.

She embraces what she calls “kooky learning,” or creative ways of getting students to connect with the books she’s reading with the class. Although she’s an English teacher, Butler has incorporated STEM principles, outdoor activities and art projects to immerse her students in the books.

In one of her first classes in the Bridge Program, Butler noticed a student who kept his head down and didn’t interact much. But the student “came alive” during a project that involved building a house out of popsicle sticks.

“It was a culminating activity done for finishing the book, and all of a sudden, he was sitting up and listening and paying attention. The boy worked on this project for months. It was not meant to be a month’s project, but then I started trading hot glue sticks for assignments – and it was contagious. The other kids



PHOTO COURTESY ERIN BUTLER

Erin Butler poses at school with her dog, Bellatrix (or Bella). On her first day as a teacher in 2016, Butler adopted Bella and took Bella with her to set up her new classroom that same day.

started joining in,” Butler said.

Using glue sticks as a makeshift currency for completing assignments, the class used recycled cardboard and other scrap materials during “tinker time,” a creative outlet that extended past that book’s project. Although that class has since graduated, Butler keeps projects displayed in her classroom.

“This year, my kids are not so into cardboard, but they’re very into drawing and designing. Okay, so now that’s the new thing. We read Percy Jackson last week, and so they started drawing new Greek gods, and we have posters everywhere,” said Butler.

The students from that “tinkering” class, now high schoolers, recently returned to Gaithersburg Middle School to mentor current middle school students in the Bridge Program and help prepare them for the transition to high school.

Teaching special education requires Butler to wear many hats – for example interpreting the legal language in the specialized learning plans for students with disabilities.

Butler said many life experiences converged to set her on this path, including mentoring her younger brother with autism, teaching dance classes and coaching teams in national competitions. Growing up, she wanted to be an engineer, until she found

the special education program as an undergraduate student.

Butler was inspired by some of her own teachers, including a fourth-grade teacher who took a hands-on approach to teaching STEM. She has almost finished her master’s in educational leadership and aspires to earn a doctorate degree in educational policy, which she would use the \$25,000 in prize money toward, she said.

“It is a teacher’s nature to not want the spotlight or to be recognized, because that’s not why we’re here,” Butler said. “We’re here to serve and support students, not for a popularity contest. A lot of us don’t want to be recognized, but we have to, in order to get the support our students need.”

Voting for the contest, which begins March 25 and continues weekly, is open to anyone through the QR code or at [americasfavteacher.org/2024/erin-butler](https://americasfavteacher.org/2024/erin-butler).



## Ukulele Ladies Perform



From left, JoEllen Sarff, Li'l Dan Celdran, Tamara Alexander, Kathy Bartolomeo and Mary Moien

Members of the Ukulele Ladies performed for students of Greenbelt Nursery School on Tuesday, March 12 in celebration of St. Patrick’s Day. The program included Irish songs such as I’m Looking over a Four-Leaf Clover and Molly Malone, plus age-appropriate

fingerplays and poems. The musicians wore costumes such as green hats and glasses and used cockle shells, shamrocks and pictures of sea creatures and leprechauns in their performance which prompted questions and comments from the young audi-

ence. Children were fascinated by the various sights and sounds of the ukuleles, especially Tamara’s bass ukulele which intrigued the listeners with its very low sounds. As emcee Mary Moien reminded the attendees, everyone is Irish on St. Patrick’s Day.



PHOTO BY KEN LOO

Four eagles, one mature and three young, soar over Greenbelt.